

Statistics in focus

TRANSPORT

THEME 7 – 3/2000

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Transport safety

Carine Collin

Traffic accidents in road and rail transport claimed about 44 000 lives in the EU in 1998; more than 1.7 million persons were injured.

For the EU as a whole, road transport fatalities have been in constant decline, showing a 44% decrease compared to 1970 despite the fact that road transport more than doubled in the same period. However, in 1998 some Member States had more than four times as many deaths per head of population as the safest countries.

Rail transport resulted in relatively few fatalities, with a clear advantage, in safety, over road transport.



Figure 1: Number of persons killed in road accidents – EU-15

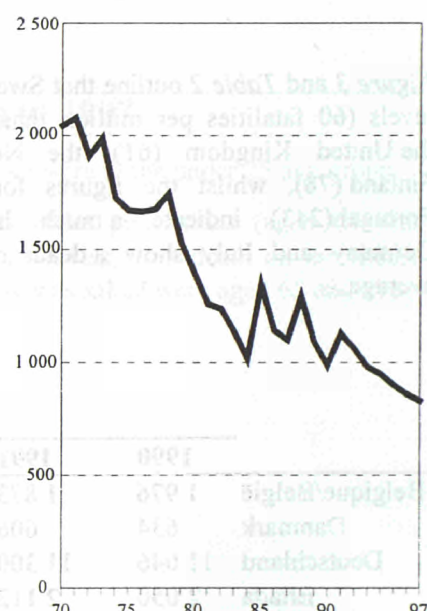


Figure 2: Number of persons killed in accidents involving railways – EU-15

Fewer road deaths despite more traffic

Road traffic accidents account for the vast majority of the fatalities registered and represent the first cause of death for persons under 40. A fatal road accident represents an average loss of 40 years (cancer: 10.5, cardio-vascular illnesses: 9.7), compared to normal life expectancy.

A large number of measures for increased road safety have been taken in the past on Community, national and local level. Improved road design, changes in legislation on drink-driving, higher safety-standards of vehicles, introduction of speed limits, stricter rules on truck and bus driving times, better monitoring of the roadworthiness of vehicles have considerably reduced the number of road transport related fatalities, despite the constant increase of traffic.

However, differences in safety levels between Member States still exist and leave potential for further improvement.



Death rate lowest in Sweden and in the United Kingdom

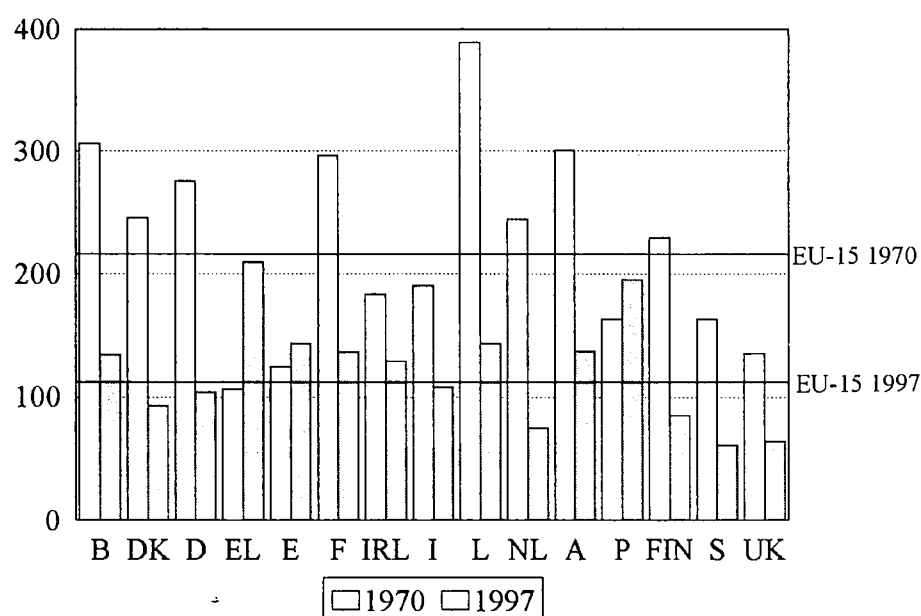


Figure 3: Number of persons killed in road accidents per million inhabitants

Figure 3 and Table 2 outline that Sweden shows the lowest levels (60 fatalities per million inhabitants), followed by the United Kingdom (61), the Netherlands (68) and Finland (78), whilst the figures for Greece (212) and Portugal (243) indicate a much higher fatality rate. Germany and Italy show a death rate close to the EU average.

The general downward trend which has been predominant in the EU since the early 1970s is not followed by Greece, Spain and Portugal where car ownership has grown very fast and road fatalities are still at a high level. A significant decline in Spain and in Portugal was registered only from the early 1990s onwards. Greece is the only country where the death rate showed no decrease over the 1990s.

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Belgique/België	1 976	1 873	1 672	1 660	1 692	1 449	1 356	1 364	1 500
Danmark	634	606	577	559	546	582	514	489	449
Deutschland	11 046	11 300	10 631	9 949	9 814	9 454	8 758	8 549	7 792
Ellada	2 050	2 112	2 158	2 159	2 253	2 411	2 068	2 199	2 226
España	9 032	8 836	7 818	6 378	5 615	5 751	5 483	5 604	5 957
France	11 215	10 483	9 900	9 867	9 019	8 891	8 541	8 444	8 918
Ireland	478	445	415	431	404	437	453	472	429
Italia	7 137	8 083	8 014	7 163	7 091	7 020	6 676	6 712	6 314
Luxembourg	71	80	73	78	66	70	71	60	57
Nederland	1 376	1 281	1 285	1 252	1 298	1 334	1 180	1 163	1 066
Österreich	1 558	1 551	1 403	1 283	1 338	1 210	1 027	1 105	963
Portugal	3 017	3 218	3 084	2 700	2 504	2 711	2 730	2 521	2 425
Suomi/Finland	649	632	601	484	480	441	404	438	400
Sverige	772	745	759	632	589	572	537	541	531
United Kingdom	5 402	4 753	4 379	3 814	3 650	3 765	3 740	3 741	3 581
EU-15	56 414	55 997	52 769	48 409	46 359	46 098	43 538	43 402	42 608
Index 1990=100	100	99	94	86	82	82	77	77	76

Table 1: Number of persons killed in road accidents

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Belgique/België	198	187	166	165	167	143	134	134	147
Danmark	123	118	112	108	105	111	98	93	85
Deutschland	139	141	132	123	121	116	107	104	95
Ellada	202	206	209	208	216	231	197	209	212
España	232	227	200	163	143	147	140	143	151
France	198	184	173	171	156	153	146	144	152
Ireland	136	126	117	121	113	121	125	129	116
Italia	126	142	141	126	124	123	116	117	110
Luxembourg	186	207	186	196	163	171	171	143	143
Nederland	92	85	85	82	84	86	76	75	68
Österreich	202	199	177	161	167	150	127	137	119
Portugal	305	326	313	273	253	273	275	253	243
Suomi/Finland	130	126	119	96	94	86	79	85	78
Sverige	90	86	88	72	67	65	61	61	60
United Kingdom	94	82	75	66	63	64	64	64	61
EU-15	155	153	143	131	125	124	117	116	114
Index 1990=100	100	99	93	85	81	80	75	75	73

Table 2: Number of persons killed in road accidents per million inhabitants

Breakdown of persons killed in road accidents in 1997

There were more drivers killed (63.6%) than any other type of road user.

Younger drivers (less than 34 years) are particularly vulnerable (40.6% of all drivers killed) and more than

a quarter (25.7%) of those were in the under 25 age group.

Pedestrians, particularly older pedestrians (aged 65 and over), remain very much at risk from death on the roads. In 1997, 44.0% of pedestrians killed were aged 65 and over.

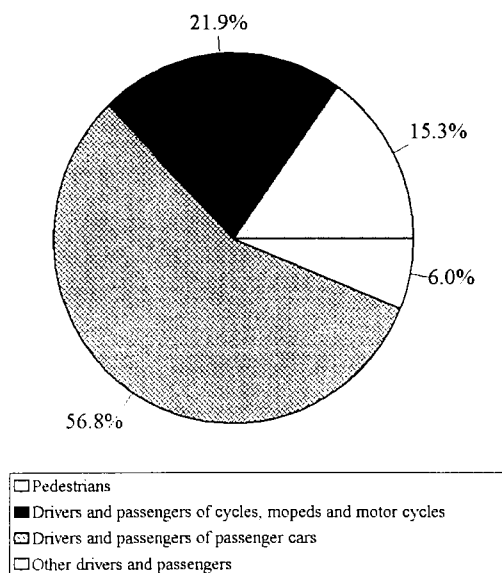


Figure 4: Breakdown of persons killed in road accidents by category of user in 1997 – EU-15

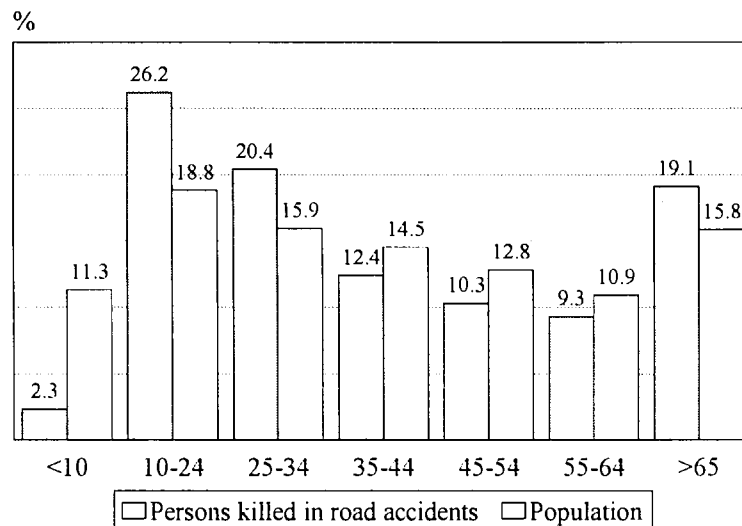


Figure 5: Breakdown of persons killed in road accidents and population by age group in 1997 – EU-15

In general, road accidents are more likely to occur on roads in built-up urban areas. However, fatal accidents happen much more likely on the faster roads (68.6%).

Most accidents occur towards the end of the week,

on Fridays (14.7%), on Saturdays (16.9%) and on Sundays (16.6%).

In 1997, the majority (74.9%) of fatal accidents occurred when the road surface was dry and more than half (57.3%) in daylight.

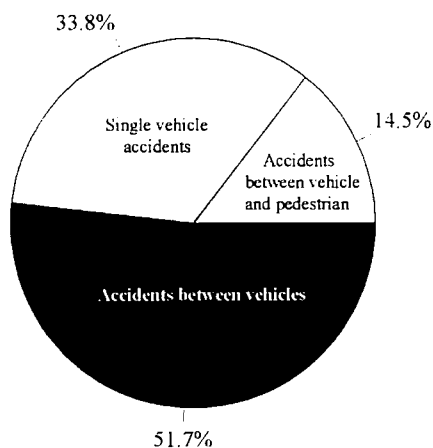


Figure 6: Breakdown of persons killed in road accidents by type of accident in 1997 – EU-15
All accidents

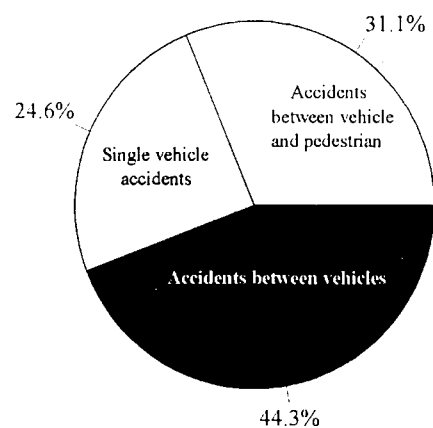


Figure 7: Breakdown of persons killed in road accidents by type of accident in 1997 – EU-15
Inside built-up areas

Rail fatalities low, variable from year to year

The situation differs for accidents linked to railways. At EU level, the absolute number of deaths fluctuated around 1 000 victims per year since 1990. A slight decrease can be observed in recent years, although strong fluctuations exist between individual years. This is particularly visible in *Table 3*, where the number of fatalities per country is presented. *Table 4* indicates that only a minority of victims are passengers travelling in trains. Most fatalities are registered in accidents occurring at railway level crossings (victims travelling in road vehicles are counted here as rail accident victims), accidents during shunting procedures and track

maintenance works, without however claiming victims among the passengers travelling in this transport mode. This should be taken into account when looking at *Figure 2* and *Figure 8* where these victims are considered.

Accidents in rail transport do not occur very frequently, especially in small countries. Thus, statistics fluctuate strongly and limit the comparability of modes. Moreover, in some cases the definition of 'accidents' and 'injured persons' differs between countries and comparison of statistics should be done carefully.

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Belgique/België	20	18	22	23	30	20	26	18	30
Danmark	6	13	16	8	9	10	:	:	:
Deutschland	250	304	325	283	272	275	252	235	225
Ellada	34	50	28	61	42	49	42	43	47
España	30	30	30	32	31	22	21	37	13
France	188	222	203	171	150	129	136	117	138
Ireland	14	11	11	3	11	7	8	14	:
Italia	83	96	116	86	83	120	106	98	97
Luxembourg	2	4	1	4	5	3	3	3	1
Nederland	43	39	34	35	35	49	36	:	:
Österreich	54	76	31	66	52	68	47	23	35
Portugal	131	139	148	132	149	95	122	119	97
Suomi/Finland	36	34	31	20	30	17	12	21	24
Sverige	18	26	29	19	11	9	17	11	17
United Kingdom	78	68	39	40	42	28	25	48	36
EU-15	987	1130	1064	983	952	901	:	:	:
index 1990=100	100	114	108	100	96	91	:	:	:
EU-15 per mio inhab.	2.7	3.1	2.9	2.7	2.6	2.4	:	:	:

Table 3: Number of persons killed in accidents involving railways

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Belgique/België	0	2	0	1	3	3	6	1	3
Danmark	1	4	4	1	2	0	:	:	:
Deutschland	50	42	54	35	26	34	25	28	114
Ellada	0	1	2	2	6	3	0	2	0
España	4	0	0	1	0	0	0	20	1
France	30	47	38	34	20	22	14	22	14
Ireland	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	:
Italia	9	24	8	0	0	4	14	16	16
Luxembourg	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0
Nederland	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	:	:
Österreich	6	8	10	11	6	7	3	1	4
Portugal	22	15	26	19	19	12	10	14	8
Suomi/Finland	0	9	1	0	3	1	3	1	10
Sverige	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
United Kingdom	37	31	18	16	17	10	17	26	18
EU-15	165	185	161	122	104	96	:	:	:
index 1990=100	100	112	98	74	63	58	:	:	:
EU-15 per mio inhab.	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.3	:	:	:

Table 4: Number of railway passengers killed in accidents involving railways

Deaths per thousand million pkm travelled

Figure 8 (EU-15), Table 5 and Table 6 (by Member State) outline the number of deaths per thousand million passenger-kilometre (pkm) travelled. It should be noted that for the road data, pedestrians and cyclists killed by passenger cars are included.

These data demonstrate the continuing advantage of rail transport, which has about one-twentieth of the number of passenger deaths per passenger-kilometre, compared to road transport.

However, there has been a proportionately greater reduction in road deaths than in rail deaths over the period 1970-1997.

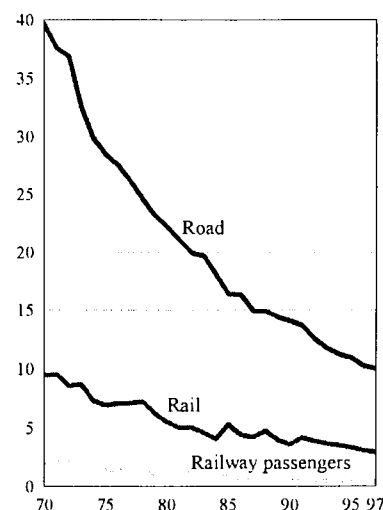


Figure 8: Deaths per 1 000 mio pkm EU-15

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Belgique/België	22	20	17	17	17	14	13	13	14
Danmark	11	10	10	9	9	9	8	7	6
Deutschland	14	15	13	12	12	12	11	11	10
Ellada	31	31	31	30	30	31	25	26	25
España	31	29	24	19	16	16	15	15	15
France	17	16	15	14	13	12	12	11	12
Ireland	22	19	17	17	15	15	15	14	13
Italia	12	13	12	10	10	10	9	9	9
Luxembourg	16	17	15	16	13	14	14	11	10
Nederland	9	9	8	8	8	8	7	7	6
Österreich	22	20	18	16	17	15	13	14	12
Portugal	40	41	37	29	24	24	23	21	19
Suomi/Finland	11	11	10	8	8	8	7	7	7
Sverige	8	7	8	6	6	6	5	5	5
United Kingdom	8	7	7	6	6	6	6	6	5
EU-15	15	15	14	12	12	11	11	10	10

Table 5: Deaths per 1 000 million pkm in road accidents

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Belgique/België	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.1	0.5	0.4	0.9	0.1	0.4
Danmark	0.2	0.8	0.8	0.2	0.4	0.0	:	:	:
Deutschland	0.8	0.7	0.9	0.6	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.4	1.9
Ellada	0.0	0.5	1.0	1.2	4.3	1.9	0.0	1.1	0.0
España	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.2	0.1
France	0.5	0.8	0.6	0.6	0.3	0.4	0.2	0.4	0.2
Ireland	0.8	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.7	:
Italia	0.2	0.5	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.3	0.3	0.4
Luxembourg	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.6	3.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Nederland	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	:	:
Österreich	0.7	0.9	1.0	1.2	0.6	0.7	0.3	0.1	0.5
Portugal	3.9	2.6	4.6	3.5	3.7	2.5	2.2	3.0	1.7
Suomi/Finland	0.0	2.8	0.3	0.0	1.0	0.3	0.9	0.3	2.9
Sverige	0.5	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0
United Kingdom	1.1	1.0	0.6	0.5	0.6	0.3	0.5	0.8	0.5
EU-15	0.6	0.7	0.6	0.5	0.4	0.4	:	:	:

Table 6: Deaths of railway passengers killed per 1 000 million pkm in accidents involving railways

➤ ESSENTIAL INFORMATION – METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

Number of persons killed in road accidents

Persons killed are all persons killed within 30 days of the accident. For Member States not using this definition [Greece (3 days up to 1995), Spain (1 day up to 1992), France (6 days), Italy (7 days), Austria (3 days up to 1991) and Portugal (1 day)] corrective factors were applied (Greece 1.18, Spain 1.3, France 1.09 up to 1993 and 1.057 from 1994, Italy 1.078, Austria 1.12 and Portugal 1.3).

Category of user

Driver:	Any person who drives a motor vehicle or other vehicle (including a cycle), or who guides cattle, singly or in herds, or flocks, draught, pack or saddle animals on a road.
Passenger:	Any person, other than the driver, who is in or on a vehicle.
Pedestrian:	Any person other than a driver or a passenger according to the above definitions. Persons pushing or pulling a child's carriage, a bath chair or invalid chair, or any other small vehicle without an engine, or pushing a cycle or moped, and handicapped persons travelling in invalid chairs propelled by such persons or moving at walking pace shall be treated as pedestrians.
Cycle:	Any road vehicle which has at least two wheels and is propelled solely by the muscular energy of the person(s) on that vehicle, in particular by means of a pedal system, lever or handle (e.g. bicycles, tricycles, quadricycles and invalid carriages).
Moped:	Any two-wheeled or three-wheeled road vehicle which is fitted with an internal combustion engine having a cylinder capacity not exceeding 50 cc.(3.05 cu. in.) and a maximum design speed not exceeding 50km (30 miles) per hour.
Motor cycle:	Two-wheeled road motor vehicle with or without side-car, including motor scooter, or three-wheeled road motor vehicle not exceeding 400kg (900 lb) unladen weight. This term does not include mopeds.
Passenger car:	Road motor vehicle, other than a motor cycle, intended for the transport of passengers and seating not more than nine persons (including the driver). The term "passenger car" therefore covers taxis and hired vehicles, provided that they have fewer than ten seats.

Type of accident

Accidents between vehicle and pedestrian:	Accidents involving one or several vehicles and pedestrians irrespective of whether the pedestrian was involved in the first or a later phase of the accident and whether the pedestrian was injured or killed on or off the road.
Single vehicle accidents:	Accidents involving no collision with other road users, even though they may be involved, i.e., vehicle trying to avoid collision and veering off the road, or accidents caused by collision with obstructions or animals on the road. Collisions with parked vehicles belong to the next type.
Accidents between vehicles:	Remainder of the two previous types.
All accidents:	Accidents occurred on motorways, inside built-up areas and outside built-up areas.
Built-up area:	An area with entries and exits especially sign-posted as such.

Figure 1 & Figure 3

Data not adjusted for different definitions of deaths (see above).

Railways

Persons killed are all persons killed within 30 days of the accidents (definition not applied by all Member States).

Deaths per 1 000 million pkm travelled

Road: Passenger-kilometre performed by passenger cars, buses and coaches are taken into consideration.

Sources	Symbols and abbreviations				
Road: Eurostat/UN-ECE/ECMT	%	Per cent	Eurostat	Statistical Office of the European Communities	
Rail: Eurostat/UN-ECE/ECMT/UIC	:	Not available			
Tables 3, 4 and 6:	1990=100	Reference year	inhab.	Inhabitants	
United Kingdom: National statistics	ECMT	European Conference of Ministers of Transport	mio	Million	
Figure 2 and Figure 8 (for rail and railway passengers):	EU	European Union	pkm	Passenger-kilometre	
EU-15 total for 1996 and 1997 are estimated	EU-15	European Union of 15 Member States	UIC	International Union of Railways	
			UN-ECE	United Nations – Economic Commission for Europe	

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